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Handel

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Christopher Hogwood, *Artistic Director*
One Hundred Seventy-seventh Season, 1991-1992

1991-1992 CHAMBER SERIES

March 27, 1992 at 8:00 p.m.
Old South Church, Boston
John Finney conducting

Vago augelletto che cantando vai
(from *Songs of War and Love*) Claudio Monteverdi
(1567-1643)

Tra mille fiamme
(from *The First Book of Madrigals*) Monteverdi

O come è gran martire
(from *The Third Book of Madrigals*)

A un giro sol de' begl' occhi
(from *The Fourth Book of Madrigals*)

Ninfa che, scalza il piede e sciolto il crine
(from *Songs of War and Love*) Monteverdi



Sonata for Two Violins and Continuo
Jane Starkman, Dianne Pettipaw,
Laura Jeppesen, James David Christie Francesco Turini
(ca. 1589-1656)

"T'amo, mia vita!"
(from *The Fifth Book of Madrigals*) Carlo Gesualdo
(ca. 1561-1613)

Moro, lasso
(from *The Sixth Book of Madrigals*)

Canzona a Due
(from *The First Book of Canzoni*) Bartolomeo de Selma
(fl. 1638)
Jane Starkman, Laura Jeppesen, James David Christie

Altri canti di Marte e di sua schiera
(from *Songs of War and Love*) Monteverdi

INTERMISSION

Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l vento tace
(from *Songs of War and Love*) Monteverdi

Canzone Francese Terza
James David Christie Giovanni Salvatore
(ca. 1610-1675)

Zefiro torna
(from *Scherzi musicali*) Monteverdi

Beltà, poi che t'assenti
(from *The Sixth Book of Madrigals*) Gesualdo

Ardo, avvampo, mi struggo, accorrete
(from *Songs of War and Love*) Monteverdi

This concert is being recorded by WBUR 90.9 FM.

The Handel & Haydn Society is supported in part by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

THE MADRIGAL IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ITALY

Within the span of only a century, roughly between 1520 to 1620, the Italian madrigal was born, took root, reached a brief, brilliant efflorescence, and died out as a living art, though its influence can be traced in later music. The term madrigal generally refers to almost any musical setting of secular verse in the sixteenth century, usually designed for four or five voice parts, with no separate instrumental accompaniment (though instruments might have played along). These pieces were usually performed in a private setting, with a single voice on each part. The madrigal is thus a form of chamber music, analogous in many ways to the consort of viols or the later string quartet.

SONGS OF LOVE AND DEATH

The madrigal emphasized words and music equally. It arose naturally in the courts of Renaissance Italy, which cultivated both poetry and music to the highest degree. The successful courtier needed to be able to read music and sing a part more or less at sight — a vital social grace — and also be responsive to lyric poetry. This meant, first of all, to respond to the sonnets of Petrarch (1300–1377), whose poems became models for imitation. In some 350 Italian lyrics, mostly variations on the subject of unrequited love, Petrarch projected an intense self-scrutiny in a language of utmost elegance and linguistic beauty. Petrarch's own love story (whether fact or poetic fiction) began when he saw a married woman he calls Laura during a Good Friday service in 1327. This and a few similar encounters over the years were as close as he ever got to her. But Petrarch began to write of his feelings about Laura, the world she inhabited, her golden hair, her delicate hand, the veil that covered her head, and so on. Twenty-one years later, when the real Laura perished in the Black Death, Petrarch's poetry took on an increasingly visionary cast; he saw Laura in heaven showering blessings on him and leading him to improve his life. As Beatrice did to Dante, Laura elevated Petrarch's thoughts to eternal matters, so that the last poem of his collection is an extended song in praise of the Virgin.

By the early sixteenth century, Petrarch's poems had become acknowledged classics. Poets adopted his forms, his poetic stance, his imagery. Most frequently encountered, because so easily parodied, is Petrarch's frequent use of oxymoron, such as his

famous image describing love as an "icy fire." His vocabulary became the vocabulary of Italian poetry, taking on layers of meaning that could be enriched by a master or cheapened by a poetaster.

Probably no image is so widespread in the vast repertory of madrigal poetry as the connection between love and death. At its most literal, death signifies the decisive and permanent rupture of two lovers or potential lovers, as the plague tore Laura away from the poet. But more often "death" appears in a metaphorical sense, usually erotic. Death thus covers almost the entire scale of human emotion, from the greatest pleasure to the greatest grief. The poets who wrote the lyrics that Renaissance composers later set, manipulated this contrast in ways both serious and playful.

During the sixteenth century, composers became

increasingly skilled at translating existing poetic images into musical figures, so that contrapuntal ingenuity came not merely from architectural structure but also concrete expressive detail. In each new setting of a familiar text, the composer was challenged to outdo someone else's earlier treatment in daring and expression. This atmosphere of overt competition caused the madrigal to develop rapidly, like plants forced in a hothouse. In his magisterial account, *The Italian Madrigal*, Alfred Einstein hailed three great Italian masters — Luca Marenzio, Carlo Gesualdo, and Claudio Monteverdi — as the "great

Probably no other image is so widespread in the vast repertory of madrigal poetry as the connection between love and death.

virtuosi" of the late madrigal. They found ways to translate the words of the poem into specific musical images: a sudden rest, forcing the singer to breathe, represented "sighs"; gently intertwining vocal lines captured the lady's "golden locks"; sudden, chromatic changes of harmony indicated a dramatic realization; and rapid strettos, piling one vocal entry tightly on top of another, suggested embraces, building finally to the musical climax.

TWO MADRIGAL STYLES

Despite the fact that they shared the same musical culture and the same interest in virtuosic musical expression, Gesualdo and Monteverdi could hardly have been more different. Carlo Gesualdo (ca.1561-1613) was a nobleman, a minor prince, for whom music was a private pleasure, not a way of making a living. He had the luxury of setting texts simply

because they pleased him or gave him an expressive challenge, and he was not required to please any patron with his work. Indeed, throughout the six books of madrigals that he published, his music is increasingly hermetic and personal, a reflection, perhaps, of personal demons (Gesualdo is most notorious for having had his wife and her lover murdered when he caught them *in flagrante*), and of his experience at the forward-looking and music-loving court of Ferrara, where he went to marry a second time. Gesualdo's madrigals move in extremes — particularly in the extremes of harmony (*Moro lasso* is the most extreme, and the most famous), which have attracted the attention of contemporary composers, including Stravinsky. Yet he maintained a certain careful balance, so that complex harmonies came in rhythmically straightforward passages, while contrapuntal complexities were normally kept to traditional harmonies.

Monteverdi (1567-1643) was the fully professional composer whose work ranged over virtually every medium and style known to his day, including some that he himself played a large role in developing. Early in his career he took a position at the musically forward-looking court of Mantua. As the composer who most clearly straddles the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the Baroque era, Monteverdi is one of the last great masters of the madrigal, but he was from very early on an inherently dramatic composer, and he ended the Renaissance madrigal tradition by taking it eventually to the new medium of opera. Monteverdi shaped his works in such a way that musical architecture and verbal expression went hand-in-hand, often creating an overtly dramatic — even operatic — effect. In the traditional, unaccompanied madrigal of the type that filled his first six books of madrigals, *A un giro sol de' begl'occhi lucenti* already begins to emphasize the three-part texture (two upper voices over a bass line) that was to become the standard texture for the next century. In this piece, Monteverdi cleverly uses a little turn figure that first descends on the word *giro* (literally “glance,” but suggesting the idea of “turning”), then ascends on *ride l'aria* (“the air laughs”). These traditional madrigalesque images

develop over a clearly defined bass line functioning with a harmonic purpose. At the same time, Monteverdi dramatizes the contrast between this opening texture and the sudden change of harmony at the words *sol io* (“I alone”), which changes the focus from the world at large to the state of the poet's heart.

As the composer who most clearly straddles the Renaissance and Baroque periods, Monteverdi ended the Renaissance madrigal tradition by taking it eventually to the new medium of opera.

FROM MADRIGAL TO OPERA

Eventually the madrigal became so thoroughly dramatized that it could go no further; beyond a certain point lay opera, and Monteverdi was the first composer to demonstrate that fact with a work that is still heard by audiences today (*Orfeo*, 1607). His last books of madrigals were no longer for five unaccompanied voices, but rather for one to three singers with accompanying instruments, like operatic numbers. These later works also drew frequently on dance patterns as a new way of organizing the harmony and the bass line into a structural element. One of

the most brilliant of these is *Zefiro torna e di soavi accenti*. Here an ostinato bass line in a dance rhythm divides the work into harmonic units, over which the two singers brilliantly and freely move, translating all of the verbal imagery into traditional madrigalesque figures (“murmuring,” “dance,” “garland,” “mountains,” “valleys”) until — once again — the crux: *Sol io*. This focus on the individual (even when represented by two singers) brings with it a sudden change to an operatic recitative style.

In one of his latest and finest madrigals, *Hor che'l ciel e la terra*, Monteverdi blends old and new styles with extraordinary flexibility and imagination. The famous Petrarchan sonnet (which quite possibly served as a model for Guarini's verse in *A un giro sol*) offers the traditional contrast between the “outside” world and the turmoil within the poet's mind. Here Monteverdi fuses the six-part writing of Renaissance classic style with the new “excited style” that he had created for use in scenes of battle and emotional excitement on the stage: moments of duet or trio texture. The piece displays, finally, that great summation — a grandly broad, truly operatic vocal line for the poem's close: “so far am I from my salvation.”

—Steven Ledbetter

Steven Ledbetter is musicologist and program annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

MADRIGAL TEXTS

Vago augelletto, che cantando vai

Vago augelletto, che cantando vai,
 Ovver piangendo, il tuo tempo passato,
 Vedendoti la notte e'l verno a lato,
 E'l dì dopo le spalle, e i mesi gai,
 Se come i tuoi gravosi affanni sai,
 Così sapessi il mio simile stato,
 Verresti in grembo a questo sconsolato,
 A partir seco i dolorosi guai.
 —*Petrarch (Rime, No. 353, octave)*

Sweet little bird, that flies away singing,
 or is it lamenting your past life,
 seeing that night and winter draw near,
 and daylight and the happy months are behind you,
 if you knew my great distress
 as well as you know your own,
 you would fly to the bosom of this disconsolate
 and share with him your grievous lamentations.

Tra mille fiamme

Tra mille fiamme e tra mille catene
 Onde n'accend'e lega
 Amor a le mie pene
 Scelse la più gentil e la più bella
 Amorous fiammella
 Che si soavemente m'impiegò il cor
 Che per beltà gradita
 Morir m'è dolce e non sperar aita.
 —*Anonymous*

From a thousand flames and a thousand chains
 with which he might inflame and bind
 me to my pains, Love
 chose the sweetest and fairest
 amorous flamelet,
 which so gently wounded my heart
 that, because of its delightful beauty,
 Death is sweet to me, and I hope not for aid.

O come è gran martire

O come è gran martire
 A celar suo desire,
 Quando con pura fede
 S'ama chi non se'l crede.
 O soave mio ardore,
 O giusto mio desio,
 S'ognun ama il suo core
 E voi sete il cor mio;
 All'hor non fia ch'io v'ami,
 Quando sarà che viver più non brami.
 —*Giovanni Battista Guarini*

Oh what a great torment it is
 to conceal one's desires
 when, with pure faith,
 one loves another who does not believe it.
 O my sweet ardor,
 O my just desire,
 since everyone loves his heart,
 and you are my heart,
 then I shall stop loving you
 only when I no longer burn to live.

A un giro sol de' begl'occhi lucenti

A un giro sol de' begl'occhi lucenti
 ride l'aria d'intorno,
 e 'l mar s'acqueta e i venti,
 e si fa il ciel d'un altro lume adorno;
 sol io le luci ho lagrimose e meste.
 Certo quando nascesti
 così crudel e ria,
 nacque la morte mia.
 —*Giovanni Battista Guarini*

At a single glance from those fair beaming eyes
 the air all around laughs,
 and the sea and winds grow calm,
 and the sky is adorned with a new light.
 I alone have tear-filled, sad eyes.
 Certainly when you were born
 so cruel and wicked,
 then was born my death.

Ninfa che, scalza il piede e sciolto il crine

Prima parte

Ninfa che scalzo il piede e sciolto il crine,
 Te ne vai di doglia in bando
 Per queste piaggie, lieta cantando e ballando,
 Non scuoti a l'herbe le fresche brine:

Part One

Nymph, who, with unshod foot and loosened hair,
 wanders free of care
 along these slopes, cheerfully singing and dancing,
 without disturbing the fresh dew on the grass:

Seconda parte

Qui deh meco t'arresta, ove di fiori
T'inghirlanda il crin novello,
Questo ch'imperla, fresco ruscello, bel pratello
Co' Suoi correnti limpidi humori.

Terza parte

Dell'usate, mie corde al suon potrai,
Sotto l'ombra di quest'orno,
A tempo il passo mover d'intorno, nè del giorno
Faran te bruna gli ardenti rai.

Ma senza pur mirarmi affretta il passo
Dietro forse a Lillo amato.
Ah, che ti possa veder cangiato quel piè ingrato,
Fera fugace, in un duro sasso!
—*Anonymous*

"Tamo, mi vita!"

"Tamo, mi vita!" la mia cara vita
Mi dice e in questa sola
Dolcissima parola
Par che trasformi lietamente il core
Per farsene signore.
O voce di dolcezza e di diletto,
Prendila tosto, Amore,
Stampala nel mio core!
Spiri solo per te l'anima mia
"Tamo, mia vita," la mia vita sia.
—*Anonymous*

Moro, lasso

Moro, lasso, al mio duolo
E chi mi può dar vita,
Ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol darmi aita!
O dolorosa sorte,
Chi dar vita mi può, ahi, mi dà morte!
—*Anonymous*

Altri canti di Marte e di sua schiera

Altri canti di Marte e di sua schiera
Gl'arditi assalti e l'honorate imprese,
Le sanguigne vittorie e le contese,
I trionfi di morte horrida e fera.

Io canto, Amor, di questa tua guerriera.
Quant'hebbi a sostener mortali offese,
Come un guardo mi vinse, un crin mi prese.
Historia miserabile ma vera.

Due belli occhi fur l'armi onde trafitta
Giacque e di sangue invece amaro pianto
Sparse lunga stagion l'anima afflitta.

Tu per lo cui valor la palma e'l vanto
Hebbe di me la mia nemica invitta
Se desti morte al cor dà vita al canto.
—*Giovanni Battista Marino*

Part Two

Stay here with me, where with flowers
your young brow may be garlanded,
where this fresh brook empearls the fair meadow
with its moist, limpid currents.

Part Three

To the familiar sound of my strings you can,
beneath the shade of this ash tree,
move your steps in time, nor will the day's
fiery rays burn you there.

But without a glance at me she quickens her step
away, perhaps towards her beloved Lillo.
Ah! May I see your ungrateful foot changed,
o cruel fleeting maid, into a hard stone!

"I love you, my life," my dear life
tells me, and in this single
most sweet word
seems to transform my heart in joy
to become master thereof.
O voice of sweetness and of delight,
take it up quickly, Love,
and stamp it in my heart!
Let my soul breathe but for you.
"I love you, my life"—may you be my life.

I die, alas, in my grief,
and she who could give me life,
alas, kills me and does not wish to help me!
O grievous fate,
she who could give me life, alas, gives me death!

Let others sing of Mars and his ranks,
of bold assaults and honored deeds,
of bloody victories and contests,
the triumphs of fearful and cruel death.

I, Love, sing of this your warrior-maiden,
of the mortal wounds I have had to suffer,
how a glance overcame me, a lock of hair seized me,
a story sad but true.

Two lovely eyes were the weapons by which my soul
was pierced, and instead of blood, bitter tears
poured forth long after.

You, Love, through whose power the palm and victory
were seized by my unvanquished enemy,
since you gave death to my heart, give life to my song.

Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l vento tace

Prima parte

Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l vento tace
E le fere e gli augelli il sonno affrena,
Notte il carro stellato in giro mena,
E nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace.

Voglio, penso, ardo, piango; e chi mi sfaccia
Sempre m'è inanzi per la dolce pena:
Guerra è'l mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena;
E sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.

Seconda parte

Cosè sol d'una chiara fonte viva
Move'l dolce e l'amaro, ond'io mi pasco;
Una man sola mi risana e punge.
E perchè'l mio martir non giunga a riva
Mille volte il dì moro e mille nasco;
Tanto da la salute mia son lunge.
—*Petrarch (Rime, No. 164)*

Zefiro torna

Zefiro torna e di soavi accenti
l'aer fa grato e'l piè discioglie a l'onde
e, mormorando tra le verdi fronde,
fa danzar al bel suon su'l prato e fiori.

Inghirlandato il crin Fillide e Clori
note temprando lor care e gioconde;
e da monti e da valli ime e profonde
raddoppian l'armonia gli antri canori.

Sorge più vaga in ciel l'aurora, e'l sole,
sparge più luci d'or; più pruò argento
fregia di Teti il bel ceruleo manto.

Sol io, per selve abbandonate e sole,
l'ardor di due begli occhi e'l mio tormento,
come vuol mia ventura, hor piango hor canto.
—*Ottavio Rinuccini*

Beltà, poi che t'assenti

Beltà, poi che t'assenti,
Come ne porti il cor, porta i tormenti.
Chè tormentato cor può ben sentire
La doglia del morire,
E un'alma senza core
Non può sentir dolore.
—*Anonymous*

Ardo, avvampo, mi struggo, accorrete

Ardo, avvampo, mi struggo, accorrete
Amici vicini all'inflammato loco;
Al ladro, al tradimento, al foco,
Scale, accette, martelli, acqua prendete
E voi tori sacrate, anco tacete.

Part One

Now that earth and sky and wind are stilled,
and sleep has seized the beasts and the birds,
Night leads her starry chariot on its course,
and in its bed, even the sea lies without a wave.

I wake, I think, I burn, I weep; and she who undoes me
is always before me, causing my sweet pain;
war is my condition, filled with anger and grief,
and only thinking of her do I find any peace.

Part Two

Thus, from a single living fountains
flows both the sweet and bitter on which I feed;
one hand alone both heals and wounds me.
And because my martyrdom never reaches port,
a thousand times a day I die and am reborn a
thousand times,
so far am I from my salvation.

Zephyr returns and, with his sweet breath,
makes the air delightful and ruffles the waters,
and, mumuring through the green branches,
makes the flowers in the fields dance to his music.

With hair garlanded, Phyllida and Cloris,
sound forth their sweet and joyous notes;
from the mountains and from deep valleys
sonorous caverns redouble the harmony.

Dawn rises more lovely in the skies, and the sun
spreads forth more golden light; a purer silver
is woven through Thetis' fair cerulean mantle.

I alone, wandering through desolate and lonely woods,
as fate decrees, over the brightness of two lovely eyes
and of my torment, now weep, now sing.

Fair one, since you absent yourself,
as you carry off my heart, carry away my torments, too.
For a tormented heart can well feel
the pain of death,
and a soul without a heart
feels no sorrow.

I burn, I seethe, I am consumed, hurry,
friends, neighbors, to the conflagration.
Stop thief! Treason! Fire!
Bring ladders! Axes! Hammers! Fetch water!
And you, sacred towers, are still silent?

Su bronzi, su ch'io dal gridar son roco,
Dite il periglio altrui non lieve o poco,
E degl'incendi miei pietà chiedete.

Son due belli occhi il ladro e seco amore
L'incendiario che l'inique faci
Dentro la rocca m'avventò del core.
Ecco i remedi omai vani e fallaci.
Mi dice ogn'un per sì beato ardore
Lascia ch'el cor s'incenerisca e taci.
—*Anonymous*

Ring out, bells, for I'm hoarse from shouting;
Tell of my peril, which is not slight,
and beg for pity on my burning state.

Two beautiful eyes are the thief; with her is Love,
the incendiary who hurled the torches
into the fortress of my heart.
Behold the remedies, all vain and useless.
Everyone says that for such a splendid glow
I should let my heart be consumed, and be silent.

Translation by Steven Ledbetter

ENSEMBLE

Soprano

Jean Danton
Rachel Hersey

Alto

Susan Byers
Pamela Dellal

Tenor

Bruce Lancaster
Rockland Osgood

Bass

Mark McSweeney
Donald Wilkinson

Violin

Jane Starkman
Dianne Pettipaw

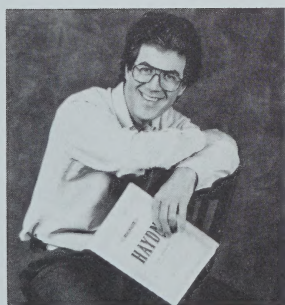
Viola da gamba

Laura Jeppesen

Organ

James David Christie

JOHN FINNEY, H & H CHORUSMASTER



John Finney holds degrees in organ performance from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and The Boston Conservatory. He has studied at the North German Organ Academy with Harold Vogel and at the

Academy for Italian Organ Music with Luigi F. Tagliavini. His teachers have included David S. Boe

and James David Christie (organ), and Lisa Goode Crawford (harpsichord). He has performed solo recitals throughout the United States and in Europe, and has appeared as organist and harpsichordist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and New York Bach Ensemble, and the Smithsonian Chamber Players. He performs regularly with the Handel & Haydn Society. In addition, he leads the Heritage Chorale in Framingham, is Director of Music for the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church, and is Chorusmaster for the Boston Early Music Festival Chorus.

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